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DISASTER RELIEF

Baptists respond to tornadoes



Severe weather swept across the South December 23 and 24, spawning at least six confirmed tornadoes that killed five people in Mississippi. Three deaths were in Marion County and two in Jones County.

An EF3 tornado struck the Columbus area, destroying the Tri-County Association office. On Dec. 24, 57 volunteers responded by covering damaged roofs with blue tarps and providing chainsaw work. Volunteers came from Tri-County Association, Pearl River Association, Gulf Coast Association, and Covington/Jeff Davis Association. Through Dec. 28, a total of 126 volunteers provided 41 tarp jobs, 15 chainsaw jobs, and 32 emotional and spiritual care contacts.

Carl Myers (right) associational mission director, Pearl River Association, is seen with other volunteers on the roof of the Tri-County Association office. (Photo courtesy of Don Gann)

Former WMU leader passes

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)

Mattie Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, 84, executive director of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) from 1974-89 who was born in the village of Neshoba



County, died Jan. 2 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"When Carolyn was elected as executive director, she came with years of experience in state WMU work," said Wanda S. Lee, current WMU executive director. "Working with a board composed of many state staff members, she brought an understanding of the challenges of their work and fresh ideas for new ways to work together."

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Latest Bible epic falls short

NASHVILLE (BP) — Though it finished atop the box office its opening weekend, director Ridley Scott's Bible epic *Exodus: Gods and Kings* has posted lackluster earnings since then and garnered mixed reviews from Christian critics.

Released Dec. 12 by Twentieth Century Fox, *Exodus* grossed \$24.5 million its first weekend, toppling *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* — Part 1 from the number one spot in gross ticket sales, according to the website Box Office Mojo. In the U.S., it has grossed a paltry \$61,342,935 as of Jan. 4 but has done much better internationally.

In comparison, the controversial Bible-based film *Noah* grossed \$43.7 million its opening weekend earlier this year and was widely viewed as yielding disappointing earnings.

"To be sure, audiences looking mainly for spectacle will get their money's worth in the \$140 million production," wrote movie reviewer Phil Boatwright in a Dec. 9 column for Baptist Press. "Unfortunately, when the film gives pause for narrative, those in charge

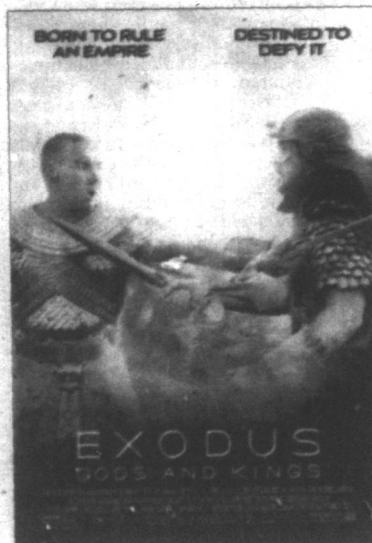
seem bent more on questioning faith in God than reaffirming it."

The movie tells the story of Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, but with notable variations from Scripture's account as noted in a review written by Brett McCracken that appeared in *Christianity Today*. He said Christian audiences may "call foul on all sorts of things:

- Moses wielding a sword but not a staff;
- Moses being chatty but Aaron having almost no lines;
- Moses killing lots of people and fighting in the Egyptian army;
- no 'staff-to-snake' scene;
- no repeated utterances of 'let my people go';
- no 'baby Moses in the Nile' scene;
- and every other deviation the film takes from the narrative in Exodus 1-14.

"This approach might balk at the problematic casting of white actors as Egyptians, non-white actors as slaves/servants, and the

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS



CHILEAN SEA BASS

What's in a name?

After a particularly delightful meal that featured a delicious entrée I had never tried before — Chilean sea bass — I decided to look up this special new friend of mine on the Internet. I was quite surprised to learn that Chilean sea bass is neither Chilean nor bass. (It does come from the sea, however.) According to priceonomics.com:

Given its name, which conjures up exotic notions of South American fisherman carefully acquiring this prized fish off the coast of Chile, the price may seem appropriate. But only a minority of Chilean sea bass come from the coast of Chile. Many fish sold under the name hail from arctic regions. Moreover, the fish isn't even a type of bass; it's a cod. Until 1977, the name Chilean sea bass didn't exist and few people ate the fish before the 1990s. Prior to that, scientists knew the fish by the less mouth-watering name of... toothfish.

In short, the Chilean sea bass is a pure marketing invention — and a wildly successful one. Far from unique, the story of the Chilean sea bass represents something of a formula in today's climate of overfishing: choose a previously ignored fish, give it a more appealing name, and market it. With a little luck, a fish once tossed back as bycatch will become part of trendy \$50 dinners.

I learned the small but expensive entrée I so much enjoyed last week was actually once part of a seven-foot-long, prehistoric-looking Antarctic creature with a mouth full of menacing teeth that, until a few years ago and a successful marketing campaign, wasn't considered good enough to use in fish sticks.

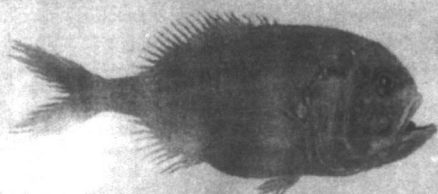
I told myself that surely such would not be the case with the tasty sea dweller the toothfish knocked off the top of my list, orange roughy, but I had to find out now. I wish I hadn't done that.

What I discovered was that orange roughy has been known for centuries as the slimehead, for good reason. According to southernfried-science.com, the slimehead possesses "a concentrated frontal array of mucus filled canals." The copious amounts of sticky mucus excreted by these canals are not harmful and are thought to be a function of the fish's sensory system but still, who would order a big slab of slimehead in a fancy restaurant? Call in the marketers once again.

It is unfortunate that many segments of the modern American Christian community seek to mimic the techniques of good marketing campaigns, changing the names of unpleasant tenets of the faith — sin, for example — into something more palatable, something that goes down easier, something that helps us avoid taking a deep look in the mirror.

It's amusing to know we are being fooled by fishmongers. It's eternally deadly serious, however, when we are fooled by smooth talkers, soothing new monikers, and modern but reasonable-sounding explanations for our awful behavior.

Christians today really have no excuse for falling for feel-good, false teachings perpetrated by false teachers. We have the example of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, and we have the Bible. What more do we need?



ORANGE ROUGHY

2014 highlights tell story

As each year transitions into the next, we see a lot of "list" stories looking back on the best and worst of the preceding 12 months. Some of these lists can be useless and annoying, but the idea is still not a bad one if we keep the right focus.

I encourage you to take some time in the days ahead and make your own list of highlights noting what God did in your church and in your personal journey throughout the past year. Not only will it make you more grateful for how He has blessed during this past year, it will also build your anticipation of the great things He has in store for the year ahead.

There were many 2014 ministry highlights at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) through Send North America that merit celebration.

■ We are seeing new church plants gain traction in some of the toughest spiritual climates in North America. For instance in Montreal, where evangelicals number less than half a percent, several new church plants are thriving; one averages 750 in attendance each week.

■ In Maine, which has the third lowest weekly church attendance of any U.S. state, there are similar encouraging signs. Kennebec Community Church in Augusta is averaging 400 for weekly worship. In Portland, Cross Church launched this year with 200 people and baptized 13 this summer.

■ In some of the hard-to-reach rural areas the story is the same. Alaska is in the midst of a church planting surge. Before 2012 Alaska Southern Baptists averaged one or two plants a year but in the last two years, at least 19 new churches have been planted and more are coming. We have increased our funding to Alaska Baptists to help get these churches started.

■ Starting with the church planting class of 2010, we began tracking new Southern Baptist church plants better than ever and the news is good: 91%



Guest opinion
with Kevin Ezell

are surviving and on average attendance is up, baptism ratios are healthy, and our church plants are giving to Southern Baptist Convention missions.

■ We had 185 churches participate in Churches Planting Churches training in 2014. These churches are now equipped and ready to become effective partners for church plants and church planters throughout North America. Overall, more than 3,900 churches are involved in our mobilization process and 1,880 have already been connected with a ministry location or a church planter.

I'm also very happy to say that NAMB is doing much better than ever before to support, encourage, and stay connected with church planters. Our Planter Support Ministry provides ongoing encouragement and equipping for our planters. In addition, an increasing number of churches are directly connecting with church planters.

There is so much more to be done in our effort to give people better access to the Gospel in North America, especially in and around our cities where more than 80% of North Americans live — but it is also encouraging to take a brief look back to celebrate God's activity and His faithfulness as we move forward with our efforts to push back lostness.

I hope you will take a moment to look back in gratitude as well.

Ezell is president of the North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga.

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BAPTISTS

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Scholars outraged by Newsweek's Bible comments

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — A Newsweek cover article calling conservative evangelicals, "God's frauds," and characterizing the Bible as full of errors has drawn a range of corrective responses from Baptist commentators.

"When Newsweek, now back in print under new ownership, let loose its first issue of the New Year on the Bible, I held out the hope that the article would be fair, journalistically credible, and interesting, even if written from a more liberal perspective," wrote R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in a Dec. 29 blog post. "But Newsweek's cover story is nothing of the sort. It is an irresponsible screed of post-Christian invective leveled against the Bible and, even more to the point, against evangelical Christianity. It is one of the most irresponsible articles ever to appear in a journalistic guise."

Appearing on the Fox News Channel's Fox & Friends show on Dec. 30, Mohler said the article demonstrates "ignorance of the facts" regarding Scripture.

"When you have someone in the media give a balanced view and talk about the great truths of the faith in an honest and balanced and journalistic way, that's fair game," Mohler told host Elizabeth Hasselbeck and guest host Scott Brown, a former Republican senator from Massachusetts, "but that's not what we're dealing with here. From the opening shot, this is an open attack upon Christianity."

Written by Vanity Fair magazine's veteran business and financial reporter Kurt Eichenwald, Newsweek's article is titled, "The Bible: So Misunderstood It's a Sin," and appears in the magazine's Jan. 2 issue. Eichenwald does not cite any conservative evangelicals as sources but does quote Bart Ehrman, a New Testament professor who has gained a reputation for attacking historic Christianity.

The 8,500-word essay begins, "They wave their Bibles at passersby, screaming their condemnations of homosexuals. They fall on their knees, worshipping at the base of granite monuments to the Ten Commandments while demanding prayer in school. They appeal to God to save America from their political opponents, mostly Democrats. They gather in football stadiums by the thousands to pray for the country's salvation. They are God's frauds, cafeteria Christians who pick and choose which Bible verses they heed with less care than they exercise in selecting side orders for lunch."

Fox News commentator Todd Starnes, a Southern Baptist and former associate editor for Baptist Press in Nashville, asked why national news magazines do not level similar criticism at adherents of other world religions.

"The national news magazines never seem to target Islam. When was the last time Newsweek or Time published an attack piece on Muhammad during Ramadan?" Starnes wrote in an online commentary. "I wonder if Newsweek would have the courage to publish 'The Koran: So Misunderstood It's a Sin'? I wonder if Newsweek would allow a feminist to weigh in on what the Islamic holy book says about women? Perhaps Newsweek could illustrate their story with cartoons of Muhammad — or maybe photographs of jihadists beheading Christians in the name of Allah? But we all know that won't happen, right Newsweek?"

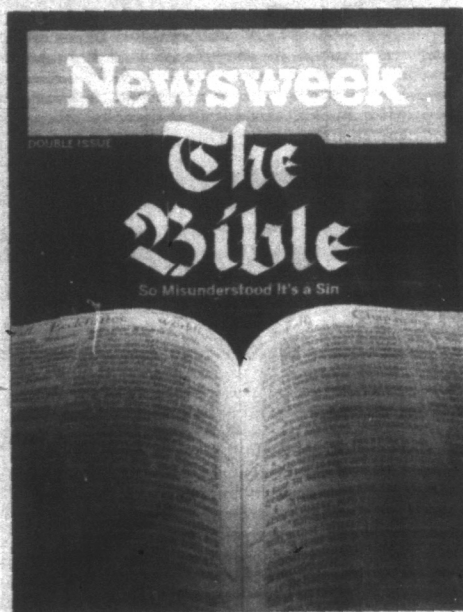
Starnes' mention of illustrations likely referenced Newsweek's decision to accompany its article on the Bible with photos of snake handlers, televangelist Pat Robertson, and the infamous protestors from independent Westboro Church in Topeka, Kan. who have picketed funerals of American soldiers killed in action. A drawing included with the article also depicts David holding Goliath's severed head.

List of problems

The Newsweek article presents as fact a list of supposed errors, contradictions, and other problems in the Bible. Though all of Eichenwald's assertions have been addressed by conservative biblical scholars, he does not mention that in the essay.

In his blog post, Mohler countered some of Eichenwald's incorrect claims. Among them:

■ "No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we've all read a bad translation — a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times."



EICHENWALD



LEMKE



MADSEN



MOHLER



QUARLES



STARNES

Mohler responded, "No knowledgeable evangelical claims that the Bibles we read in English are anything other than translations. But it is just wrong and reckless to claim that today's best translations are merely 'a translation of translations of translations.' That just isn't so — not even close."

Charles Quarles, professor of New Testament and biblical theology at Southeastern Seminary in Ft. Worth, added in written comments to Baptist Press, "Several excellent translations of the Bible are available today. Many evangelical scholars read the Bible in the original languages, prepare their lectures and sermons from the Hebrew and Greek texts, and constantly consult ancient manuscripts of these texts."

"I frequently read directly from facsimiles of ancient biblical texts like Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and p46. The author of this article is clearly unaware of the outstanding biblical research conducted by Christian scholars or conveniently chose to ignore it."

■ "About 400 years passed between the writing of the first Christian manuscripts and their compilation into the New Testament," Eichenwald writes. "(That's the same amount of time between the arrival of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower and today.) The first books of the Old Testament were written 1,000 years before that. In other words, some 1,500 years passed between the day the first biblical author put stick to clay and when the books that would become the New Testament were chosen."

Mohler responded that Eichenwald "grossly exaggerates the time between the writing of the New Testament documents and the establishment of a functional canon." The apostle Peter referred to Paul's writings as already regarded among the "Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16), and an ancient document written by Papias of Hierapolis reveals that the canonical Gospels existed as a collection by A.D. 110, according to Christian History Magazine.

■ The Koiné Greek of the New Testament "was written in what is known as scriptio continua — meaning no spaces between words and no punctuation," Eichenwald writes. "So, a sentence like *weshouldgoeatmom* could be interpreted as 'We should go eat, Mom,' or 'We should go eat Mom.' Sentences can have different meaning depending on where the spaces are placed."

Mohler acknowledged that the New Testament was indeed written without spaces or punctuation but he observed, "There is no text in the Bible in which this is truly a problem. Context determines the meaning, and no mom is in any danger of being eaten due to confused punctuation."

■ Eichenwald also suggests that Scripture does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity, and he criticizes Christians who believe the Bible condemns homosexuality.

Mohler countered that while there is not an isolated proof text that says God is one essence and three persons, "the doctrine of the Trinity [is] drawn from the totality of the New Testament."

■ Regarding homosexuality, Mohler noted that Eichenwald "appears unable to deny... that Romans 1:27 identifies men lusting after other men as sinful."

Various Christian scholars have countered additional claims of error presented as fact in the Newsweek article. For example, Eichenwald writes that "contradictions abound" between the accounts of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke.

Thor Madsen, professor of New Testament, ethics, and philosophy at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., said in a Dec. 23 Baptist Press article, "Matthew's infancy narrative would contradict Luke's only if, in some respect, Matthew says 'A' and Luke says 'not A.' But the two accounts don't differ in that kind of way. What we see, rather, are differences arising from the standards by which Matthew chooses to include information not given by Luke, and vice versa."

Political hypocrites

Eichenwald names conservative politicians such as Sarah Palin, former governor of Alaska and former vice-presidential candidate; former Congresswoman Michele Bachmann; outgoing Texas Governor Rick Perry; and current Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal — all Republicans — as examples of Christians who apply the Bible incorrectly and hypocritically.

Bachmann "should shut up and sit down" if she takes seriously the teaching of 1 Timothy 2:12 that women should "stay silent," Eichenwald writes. He adds, "Every female politician who insists the New Testament is the inerrant word of God needs to resign immediately or admit she is a hypocrite."

Mohler countered that Eichenwald "seems to believe that the teachings about women teaching and leading in 1 Timothy would apply to a woman in political office, failing to read that the text is clearly speaking of order within the Christian assembly."

Steve Lemke, provost at New Orleans Seminary, told Baptist Press in written comments that Eichenwald "grossly mischaracterizes both Christians and the Bible. He primarily cites non-Christian and liberal scholars, so their opinions predictably challenge biblical inerrancy. Eichenwald is not writing in an area of his expertise, and evangelical scholars such as Dan Wallace [of Dallas Theological Seminary] and Al Mohler have already shown that his outrageous claims are devoid of accuracy."

In the end, "this article is likely to do far more damage to Newsweek than Christianity," Mohler wrote. "Kurt Eichenwald probably has little to lose among his friends at Vanity Fair, but this article is nothing less than an embarrassment. To take advantage of Newsweek's title — it so misrepresents the truth, it's a sin."

Editor's note: Eichenwald's Newsweek commentary can be read in its entirety at <http://www.newsweek.com/2015/01/02/thats-not-what-bible-says-294018.html>.

One of the absolute, most glorious attributes of the Christian faith is forgiveness. The splendor and brilliance of God's forgiveness of our sins is overwhelming. God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die on a cross so that He could say, "Your sins have been paid for and I forgive you." At that spiritual transactional moment our sins are gone. They are never to be held against us again, never to be a part of our life and never to be a part of our future. They are gone! As the Old Testament struggles with trying to explain to us how much they are gone and where they are gone, the Scripture says that they are buried in the depths of the sea. They are removed as far as the east is from the west. That is a far piece.

I will never forget when I heard for the very first time someone explaining that you can go north or south just so far, and if you were to circle the globe from north to south or south to north that eventually you will get to a point that you would then end up going south to north, and then you would begin going north to south. But when you go east to west it is infinite. You can go west, and west, and west and it will always be west and you do not ever have to change or stop going west or east. God has separated our sins from us as far as the east is from the west and there is no measurement. There is no spot where it stops being west or stops being east. Our sins are gone. While we rejoice and celebrate



Forgive – A Wonderful Old Thought for a New Year!

in the glory of God's goodness and His forgiveness of our sins, our forgiveness seems to be far more difficult for us to deal with.

When someone sins against us, wrongs us, hurts us and the opportunity for us to forgive stands at our heart's door, what do we do? Among other things, we just kind of struggle with what to do and maybe even spend time wrestling with philosophical ideas like I may forgive, but I cannot forget. Lily Tomlin, the comedian and philosopher, once said that real forgiveness takes place when we give up all hope of ever having a better past. What a thought!

It is not unlike the statement you hear frequently today, "It is what it is." But what do you do with it when it is what it is? The only thing that we are called on to do and the only thing that is possible to do is to let it go. Forgive! We do have the opportunity of having a better future, and it can be shaped, blessed, bright, and hopeful. When you think about it, that is the way it is with God and us. That is also the way that it can be with us and us. It is all that you can do and all that you must do. You cannot change the past, but you can let go of the past and when you do your future becomes amazingly different.

It is interesting to watch many of us who are unwilling to forgive. In our minds we determine that we have been wronged. And the truth is we have been, and so that justifies us to just live in bitterness and unforgiveness as though that will make us not only feel better but be better people. Really! For just a moment, think about that. What if God chose to walk down the road of unforgiveness toward us? His name has been defamed and He has been rejected and hurt. So God determines that He will just sit in a position of unforgiveness. As you think about that, you realize that is not His character. He is not that kind of person. You cannot believe that He would think or do that. You would be right, but He expects us to be like Him. That means when we forgive and treat people with grace and mercy we are acting in the character and goodness of God. If we do not, we take on the character of hard heartedness, bitter, broken and even angry human beings.

Our forgiveness is not just an expression to other people that lets them off the hook so that they can just go on about their business. No, our forgiving spirit lets us off of the hook and transforms our character to the likeness of Jesus. When you forgive you can live and give. Forgive for God's sake and forgive for the sake of others. For the sake of yourself, do it today!

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Staff Changes



OLD VICKSBURG ROAD CHURCH, Clinton, has called Jonathan Michael Poe as pastor Dec. 14, 2014. Shown are Mark Akers, Poe, Billy Lancaster, and Willis Matthews.



MOUNT OLIVET CHURCH, FOREST, has called Chris Wells as pastor. He is from Philadelphia and comes with his wife Sarah and daughters, Blair and Annelise.

College News

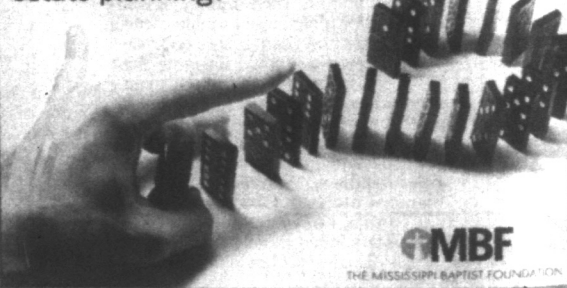
► The William Carey University School of Education will offer the doctor of education (Ed.D.) in educational leadership K-12 beginning in November 2015, pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The new degree will prepare candidates to become effective leaders in their school districts. The degree is offered primarily in an online format with 61 required course hours, including the dissertation. For more information on the new degree, contact Liesa Weaver, assistant professor of education and chair of educational leadership, at lweaver@wmcarey.edu. For more information about the School of Education, call (601) 316-6600 or visit www.wmcarey.edu.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Crystal Ridge Church, Louisville:** January Bible Study/Revival, Jan. 11 – 14; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. – Wed., 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, speaker; Charles Rook, pastor.

► **Cedar Grove Church, Lena:** Revival, Jan. 18 – 19; Sun., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon., 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, speaker; Henry Heitmann, pastor.

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Two ways to register

Call the Foundation at 601.292.3210 or email foundation@mbcb.org

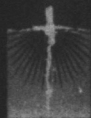
What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

January 8, 2015

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.



BAPTISTS

Sponsored by the
Evangelism Department,
Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board

For more information contact
the Evangelism Department at
800-748-1651, Ext. 278,
or 601-292-3278

HERE AM I! SEND ME.

ISAIAH 6:8

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SESSION II:

JUNE 11 - 14 CENTRAL HILLS RETREAT

SESSION III:

JUNE 15 - 18 BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

*CAMPS BEGIN ON THE FIRST DAY WITH REGISTRATION 2-4 P.M.
AND ENDS WITH BREAKFAST ON THE LAST DAY.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

2015 DINNER

REGION 5

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH,
HATTIESBURG
JANUARY 22
6:30 P.M.

REGION 4

POPLAR SPRINGS DRIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH,
MERIDIAN
MARCH 19
6:30 P.M.

REGION 3

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,
JACKSON
MAY 14
6:30 P.M.

REGION 1

NORTH GREENWOOD
BAPTIST CHURCH,
GREENWOOD
AUGUST 20
6:30 P.M.

REGION 2

HARRISBURG BAPTIST CHURCH,
TUPELO
OCTOBER 1
6:30 P.M.

FEATURING
JIM FUTRAL,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-TREASURER, MBCB

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March 20-21, 2015 | Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison, Mississippi

Awards Competition

- Entries in the Awards Competition must have been produced or aired between January 1, 2014 – January 1, 2015
- Award Entry Deadline is January 23, 2015
- Entry form and registration is online

Banquet and Workshop

- Banquet and Workshop Registration Deadline is March 6, 2015
- Registration for all activities (Banquet and Workshop) is: \$35 per person
- Friday Awards Banquet only or Saturday Workshop only is \$25 per person

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION COMING TO YOUR MAILBOX SOON!
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Contact Communication Services of the MBCB for more information at 800-748-1651, Ext. 378, or jchen@mbcb.org

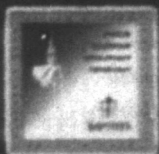
DEACON MINISTRY EMPHASIS

is a plan with specific actions that highlight deacon ministries and involve deacon training and service.

The purpose of Deacon Emphasis is to:

- Focus on their biblical role
- Build team relationships
- Secure involvement
- Develop skills for ministry

For more information contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at 601-292-3305.



2015

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Visit the MBCB Web site for a complete schedule of Pastor/Leadership Development Department 2015 events. www.mbc.org

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2015

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FEBRUARY 27-28, 2015

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, VICKSBURG
FEBRUARY 27-28, 2015

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Registration deadline: February 6, 2015

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Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept.,
MBCB, 800-748-1651, Ext. 283
601-292-3283

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BLACK CHURCH
LEADERSHIP
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July 16-18, 2015

To register call:

Early Registration:

Registration:

OASIS 2015

Missions Leaders,

Looking for your next missions project? Well, we hope you will consider the OASIS 2015 Project. On October 22-26, 2015, a retreat for single career missionaries will take place in Malaysia. The purpose of the retreat is to provide opportunities for worship, fellowship, and encouragement. More than 85% of the single missionaries serving in this area of the world are women. Since our missionaries attend this retreat at their own expense, we want to say "thank you" to them for their service by sponsoring their participation in the retreat this year. The cost per person is \$900 and this includes all their expenses. All donors will be provided the name (or initials) of a missionary so you can pray for them during the retreat. **The DEADLINE to participate is April 2, 2015.** Because of the logistics of this event (plane tickets, etc. ...) an early deadline had to be set. Thank you for understanding!

We hope that you will prayerfully lead your group or church to help sponsor a missionary to attend this year's OASIS event. This is an opportunity for us to remind these singles that they have not been forgotten and that we are indeed holding the ropes for them. For more information contact **Ken Rhodes, Director of Missions Mobilization for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**, at krhodes@mbcb.org, or 800-748-1651, Ext. 398. Make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Mail donations to:
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OASIS 2015
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205

SUPER SUMMER

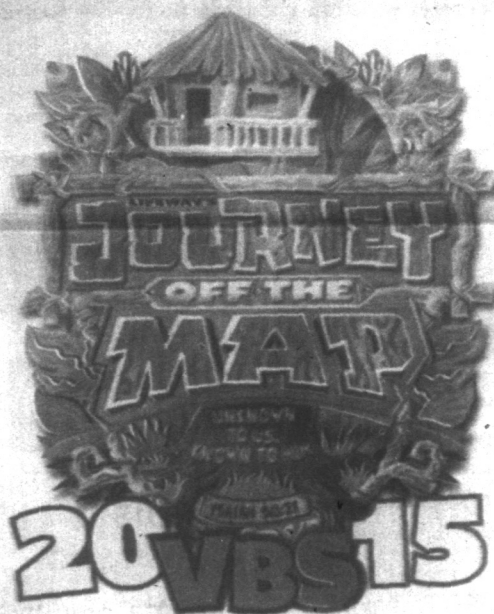
MISSISSIPPI SUPER SUMMER

July 13-17, 2015
Mississippi College

Registration begins Feb. 1.

For costs and registration requirements visit our Web site
www.mssupersummer.com

For more information contact the Discipleship/Family Ministry Department, MBCB, at 800-748-1651, Ext. 283, 601-292-3283.



REGIONAL TRAINING

Time at all locations: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

- 4/23 Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Ridgeland
- 4/28 Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church, Meridian
- 4/30 North Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford
- 5/4 Crosspoint Community Church, Hattiesburg
- 5/5 First Baptist Church, Brookhaven

VBS Kick-Off

March 7, 2015

9 a.m. - noon

First Baptist Church, Richland

For more information contact the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at:
800-748-1651, Ext. 294, or 601-292-3294

Pray this day for...

January 9 - 22, 2015

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God Reigns.'" Isaiah 52:7 (ESV)

Pray for: **John & Melinda Kyzar**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through personalization, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination & evangelism.

Pray for: **Asbury & Jeannie Martin**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert & Janice Mooney**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **John & Sarah Perkins**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through mission support, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Eugenia & Tracy Putnam**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Steven & Nickolee Roberts**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Steven & Ruth Roberts**, missionaries ministering to Southeast Asian Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **C. & Marleen Robinson**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

GOING DEEPER

9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

February 7, 2015

Central

Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon

February 21, 2015

North/South

FBC, Tupelo/Marion BA, Columbia

State Literacy Missions Conference

July 31—Aug. 1, 2015

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, Clinton

For more information contact the WMU at 800-748-1651,

Ext. 215, or 601-292-3215.

Miss Laura Wingo - 3/1/01
Parents: Floyd & Sylvia
America Peoples

Mr. S.D. - 3/13/12
Parents: D & L
Restricted

Miss R. R. - 3/2/09
Parents: J & K
Restricted

Miss Abigail Hewitt - 3/15/97
Parents: Earl & Ramona
West Africa

Miss Lullie Adair - 3/6/09
Parents: James & Mary
Margaret
Sub-Saharan African Peoples

Miss Emma Grace Epps - 3/17/03
Parents: Aaron & Tiffany
America Peoples

Miss Erin DeMars - 3/6/95
Parents: Guy & Cindy
West Africa

Miss Emma Cox - 3/25/08
Parents: Jeremy & Kimberly
Restricted

Mr. Blake - 3/7/07
Parents: J & M
Restricted

Miss Emma Worthy - 3/28/03
Parents: Charlie & Shannon
Worthy
European Peoples

Miss R.G. - 3/10/04
Parents: J & H
European Peoples

Mr. Charlie S. - 3/13/05
Parents: J & C
Restricted

Encourage an MK with a card!

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

PLEASE NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU.

Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.



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or rluper@abchomes.org

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BIBL i O C I P H E R

ZJU CXDI GXZMM QZJUDB KBEV GDZ

CE GDZ, ZJU KBEV CXD JEB CX DODJ

CE CXD DZGC, CXDI GXZMM BFJ CE

ZJU KBE CE GDDW CXD QEBU EK CXD

MEBU, ZJU GXZMM JEC KTJU TC.

ZVEG DTLXC: CQDMOD

Clue: Q = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible
knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been en-
coded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted
throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to
last week's puzzle: Hosea 14:2

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004. © 2005

Just for the Record



The children of **VICTORY CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, presented a cantata, A Shepherd's Story, Dec. 14.



CALVARY CHURCH, SMITHDALE, held a VIP Christmas party recently.

In other Church News:

► The women's ministry of
First Church, Madison, is
hosting an event, Devinely De-
signed, Jan. 11, 6 p.m. Tracie
Miles of Proverbs 31 Minis-
tries, speaker; Sherry Carter,
music. Tickets, \$10 online
at www.fbcmadison.org or
(601)856-6177.

► **Crystal Ridge Church, Louisville**, is hosting a singing
with the Tero family Jan. 10, 6
p.m. Love offering.

► **Neshoba Church, Union**,
will be having a January Bible
Study on Galatians Jan. 14 be-
ginning 11 a.m. in the morn-
ing worship service and going
through the evening service at
6:30. Kevin Meador, leader.



MT. PISGAH CHURCH, SANDHILL, elected two new deacons.
Shown are Charlie Evans, pastor Hal Hood, and Murray Farrar.



NEW HOPE CHURCH, FOXWORTH, rec-
ognized those who had perfect attendance
in Sunday School for the past church year.
Shown are B.B. Springer (59 years); Jimmy
Thomas (45 years); and Sherrell Magee
(33 years.)



James Ruffin, pastor, **DEKALB CHURCH, DEKALB**, received a certificate for 60 years
of pastoring churches. He is seen with deacon
chairman Joe VanDevender (left). The church
held a pastor appreciation lunch following the
morning worship service.

Pontotoc church's financial secretary pleads guilty

PONTOTOC, Ms. (Special) — The long-time financial secretary for First Church, Pontotoc, pled guilty Dec. 8 to stealing more than \$562,000 from the church over a 15-year

period, according to a report written by David Helms in the Dec. 10 issue of the Pontotoc Progress newspaper.

Laura L. Franklin, 65, of Pontotoc entered four guilty

pleas before Circuit Judge Thomas Gardner III. The charges included two counts of embezzlement, one count of false pretense, and one count of credit card fraud. Gardner

sentenced Franklin to a total of 33 years in prison, with 28 years suspended, and ordered her to repay the church in the amount of \$562,277.74, the Progress reported.

Gardner agreed to a request from Franklin to be allowed to spend Christmas with her family, the Progress article stated, and ordered her to report to the Pontotoc County Jail on Jan. 2.

Huckabee departing Fox news show to consider 2016 race for U.S. president

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — Former Arkansas governor and Baptist pastor Mike Huckabee ended his Fox News TV show Jan. 3 in view of a possible run for the White House in 2016. In his last campaign for the presidency, Huckabee finished second in 2008 to U.S. Sen. John McCain for the Republican nomination to face Democrat Barack Obama.

"As much as I have loved doing the show, I cannot bring myself to rule out another presidential run," Huckabee, 59, said in a news release prior to his show's Jan. 3 air-

"As much as I have loved doing the show, I cannot bring myself to rule out another presidential run."

Mike Huckabee

Former Arkansas governor and Baptist pastor



ing. Huckabee has hosted the weekend show for the past six and a half years.

Huckabee said he will make a decision about running for president in late spring, "but

the continued chatter has put Fox News into a position that is not fair to them nor is it possible for me to openly determine political and financial support to justify a race.

The honorable thing to do at this point is to end my tenure here at Fox."

The RealClearPolitics.com website, in an analysis of various polls for the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses in February 2016, placed Huckabee in the lead with an average of 15.7% among respondents from July through October.

Huckabee served as Arkansas governor from 1996-2007, and as lieutenant governor from 1993-96. He was president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention from 1989-91.

1ST ANNUAL DISASTER RELIEF GOLF TOURNAMENT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TUNICA

WHEN
Saturday, April 4, 2015

WHERE
Tunica National Golf & Tennis Club
1 Champions Lane
Robinsonville, MS

FORMAT
2 low ball, 4 man,
4 ladies or mixed

ENTRY FEE
\$175 per person
(\$60 goes for greens fee,
\$10 for food, \$10 for prizes)

Prizes will be given out of the pro shop, the remaining 95% goes to help rebuild New Strangers Rest Baptist Church which was destroyed in a tornado December, 2013. Entry fees are due by February 28, 2015 and can be mailed to: Mike Boren, c/o Citizens Bank & Trust, P.O. Box 788 Tunica, MS, 38676

EPIC

cont. from p. 1

inexplicable preponderance of British accents. And most of all, this approach would complain about the depiction of God's communication with Moses through a (spoiler alert!) zealous, wrathful 11-year-old British boy.

Chris Stone, founder of the Christian watchdog group Faith-Driven Consumer, said both Exodus and Noah under-

performed financially because their directors deviated from the biblical accounts.

"Ridley Scott's failure thus far to deliver the core audience for Exodus speaks to a deep dysfunction within Hollywood, an elitist arrogance that supercedes good business sense," Stone said in a statement. "Both Scott and [Noah director Darren] Aronofsky allowed their personal bias to create a chasm between their films and their natural audiences.

"Consumers vote with their wallet. Conversely, filmmakers who respect the audience and their deeply held beliefs are rewarded."

Stone noted that The Passion of the Christ, which was largely faithful to Scripture, grossed \$83.8 million its opening weekend — more than three times what Exodus brought in.

Exodus: God and Kings is rated PG-13 for violence, including intense battle scenes.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

God Inspires the Work • Nehemiah 2:1-8, 17-18

Context

Nehemiah lived during the 5th Century, when Artaxerxes (465-424 BC) ruled Persia. He served as the king's "cupbearer" (1:1). The Hebrew word is a participle that literally means "one causing to drink" (2:1; see also Gen. 40:9-13; 1 Kg. 10:5).

A cupbearer did not just bartend. He protected the king by sampling the wine before serving it. "On account of the constant fear of plots and intrigues, a person [would] be regarded as thoroughly trustworthy to hold this position" (The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, 766). Accordingly, "the office was one of signal influence and honor" (Emmett Willard Hamrick, "Ezra-Nehemiah," The Broadman Bible Commentary, 472).

When Nehemiah journeyed to Judah, the Jews there appointed him "governor." Chapters 1-12 chronicle his twelve-year term (5:14-19). He later returned to Judah for an unspecified amount of time (13:6-30).

Connection

April 30, 2014, was the last day of the Spring Semester at Mississippi College. I had anticipated being busy that Wednesday, but I did not prepare for calamity: the aged rubber hose that connected our washing machine to the cold water line ruptured. "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner").

From April 30 until June 5, my family and I were nomads. As we walked through that dreaded valley dubbed "Rebuilding," God was faithful. He loved us through a host of friends who either housed us or fed us.

Rebuilding is different than building, a fact that the Book of Nehemiah reveals. Note the occurrence of three verbs: "rebuild" (2:5, 17; 4:1, 10, 17; 6:1, 6; 7:1, NASB), "repair" (30 times in chap. 3, NASB), and "restore" (3:8; 4:2, NASB). To build is exciting, but to rebuild is exhausting; a burden that survivors bear. Whereas building represents progress (more than before), rebuilding is a struggle to break even; getting back what once had been.

Are you facing a rebuilding project? Is it life following the loss of a loved one, recovery from an illness or an injury, marriage restoration before divorce proceedings, reconciliation with a rebellious child or an estranged parent, business restructuring after bankruptcy, or renovations due to fire or storm? Before his work began, surrounded by rubble, Nehemiah testified, "The good hand of my God was on me" (2:8; see also 2:18). God is the master builder.



Explore the Bible

with Ivan Parke

Content

Prayer: The First Work

Four months separate chapters one and two; Chislev (1:1) is November/December and Nisan (2:1) is March/April. For Nehemiah, it was a season of intense prayer: "I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven . . . day and night" (1:4, 6, NASB).

At Morrison Heights Baptist Church, our Wednesday night prayer list has a title:

"PRAYER, The first work." It reminds members every week that praying should never be a last resort.

Nothing else that

a human being can do mattered more to Nehemiah. His prayers appear in chapters 1 (vv. 4-11), 4 (vv. 4-5), 5 (v. 19), 6 (vv. 9, 14), and 13 (vv. 14, 22, 29, 31). Additional references to Nehemiah praying appear in chapters 2 (v. 4) and 4 (v. 9).

Because he had prayed, Nehemiah witnessed firsthand what no human being could have done single-handedly. First, Artaxerxes granted him a lengthy leave of ab-

sence (2:1-6). Politicking was not needed. Second, Persia partly paid for the project (2:7-8). Why would pagans care about the holy city? Third, Nehemiah and his fellow workers (3:1-32) rebuilt Jerusalem's walls in less than two months (6:15). Those very walls had been built piecemeal over centuries of habitation (e.g., the "Broad Wall," mentioned in 3:8; described briefly in 2 Chr. 32:5; Is. 22:4-11). Nehemiah's prayers had invited God to intervene.

Rebuilding Project: God's Work

Because he had prayed, Nehemiah received God's "blueprints" for rebuilding (2:12). The work would have been daunting even if no one had harassed the Jews. Note the condition of Jerusalem: "broken down" (1:3; 2:13, NASB), "burned"/"consumed with fire" (1:3; 2:3, 13, 17, NASB), and "desolate" (2:3, 17, NASB).

The enemy added insult to injury (2:10, 19-20; 4:1-3, 7-12; 6:1-14, 17-19). Yet, they confirmed by their ungodly opposition that the reconstruction was God's work; the reason that Nehemiah notified them, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" (6:3)

Parke is professor, Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy, Mississippi College, and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

The Shelter of God's Protection • Psalm 91:1-4; 9-11, 14-16

Class, it is time for a review! Over the past five weeks our main theme has been Storm Shelter: Psalms of God's Embrace. Psalm 23 was the foundation as we learned God is with us no matter what we are facing. Then brick by brick we built upon this foundation with the following truths: God Himself is our salvation; God's forgiveness brings restoration and joy; God encourages me when I feel overwhelmed; and last week we studied God is the source of peace in the midst of turmoil. Today we will place the final brick to the foundation: God is my ultimate protection.

We all spend time and money taking steps to protect ourselves from danger. We try to protect our children from harm. We hope to protect our finances with sound investments and avoid disaster from a volatile market. We take precautions to protect our health. Yet nothing we do guarantees protection. How then should we live—in constant fear or adopt a "well that's life" attitude? The answer is no, we are to trust God's loving protection.

Without a title, a writer's name, or date of composition, Psalm 91 is referred to as the "The Lord's Protection". Some believe Moses wrote the Psalm because it ties back to Psalm 90. Additionally there are expressions which are shown in other writings from Moses. C. H. Spurgeon states, "There is not a more cheerful Psalm. Its tone is elevated and sustained; it is faith at its best" (Treasury of David).

The key verse to this Psalm is verse 1: "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall remain stable and fixed under the shadow of the Almighty (Whose power no foe can withstand) (AMP). Faith at its best is learning to abide in the secret place of The Most High (Hb. El Elyon). Jerry Rankin comments

In the Secret Place: "The primary issue through the Psalms is a relationship with God in which we are constantly abiding in His present and acknowledging His providence. The result is assurance of His provision. When we are constantly aware of being 'in Him,' we find ourselves overshadowed by His almighty power, controlling our destiny, avenging our enemies, and making every provision for our protection and blessing.

That assurance comes from affirming our faith and reliance on God, abiding in Him, and confessing, as in verse 2, "[He is] my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!" Notice the imagery used in verses one through five. The picture of a mother bird placing her babies under her wings (Mt. 23:37). The terms refuge and fortress, indicate military strength or protection. Then 'the snare of the fowler or the hunter's net'. His faithfulness is a shield

and buckler (Eph. 6:16). God's faithfulness means we can count on His protection.

God's sovereignty means He can protect us in all things. Again we see the reference to the "Most High, my refuge" (vs.9). In verse 10, "no evil shall be allowed to befall you..." there is a very important point we need to remember: no one is exempt from suffering. First Peter 2:21 says: "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered

for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps (ESV)." Jerry Rankin comments: "The problem is our thinking of safety in world terms of comfort and absence of suffering rather than in terms of our spiritual security in Christ... Abiding in Him liberates us from the fear and threats of what might happen to us." If you are in Christ, you are secure under the shadow of the Almighty. No one can pluck you out of the Heavenly Father's hand (John 10:29). The 11th verse is the one Satan misquoted to Jesus (Matt. 4:6).

In the final section, verses 14-16, God Himself is the speaker—"I will deliver, I will protect, I will answer, I will be with him, I will rescue and honor him, with long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation." In verse 14, the word for love means a deep longing for God, clinging to Him. Then in verse 16 we see the blessing He gives to those who know and love Him. In the Old Testament this was obedience to the Law. Our final point: A loving relationship with God keeps us under His protection.

Daily Dwelling on the Word - Proverbs 1:33

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.

Bible Studies for Life

with Laura Leathers



WMU

cont. from p. 1

"She laid a strong foundation for the partnership that exists today between the national office and our state WMU partners. Her love for missions and missionaries will continue to

inspire all of us who lead today to stay faithful to the purpose of WMU."

During the years she led national WMU the organization experienced growth in church missions organizations; began several initiatives including Acteens Activators, Baptist Nurses Fellowship, and New Hope

Publishers; and moved WMU from downtown Birmingham to its current location at 100 Missionary Ridge.

A graduate of New Orleans Seminary, she was awarded honorary doctorates from William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mobile College in Mobile AL, Campbell University in

Buies Creek, N.C., Georgetown College in Georgetown, Ky., and Houston Baptist University in Houston, Texas.

In 1989, Crumpler retired from WMU and married James Joseph Crumpler, a widower who was then pastor of Mt. Carmel Church in Cincinnati. She also became involved with the

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, serving as moderator in 1995-96.

She is survived by her husband and a host of family members. Visitation will be Jan. 23, 4:30-7:30 p.m., at Mt. Carmel Church. A memorial service, also at the church, will be held on Jan. 24 at 9:30 a.m.